

AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT

INCORPORATED

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FOGG ART MUSEUM
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

March 31, 1952

Newsletter Number Four

and

Minutes of Annual Meeting

Dear Member:

Since our last letter was sent to you, the Directorship of the Center has shifted from W. S. Smith to Arthur E. R. Boak, of the University of Michigan. Dr. Smith left Egypt in January, met Professor Boak in Rome and acquainted him with the operations of the Center so that upon his arrival in Cairo, on February 10th, he was well-prepared to carry on. A final report of the Center's activities under the aegis of Dr. Smith must wait upon his return to good health, as unfortunately soon after his arrival in the States he was hospitalized. As of this writing, Dr. Smith is making good progress toward recovery and I am sure that all members will join with me in wishing him a speedy return to good health. A report from Director Boak will form part of our next newsletter.

On January 21st our Assistant Treasurer, Bernard V. Bothmer, lectured under the auspices of the Center at the Museum of Archaeology of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to a group of members and their guests. Dr. E. E. Peterson, Director of the Museum, writes that the lecture proved exceptionally interesting and drew very well, despite its coincidence with the beginning of examination week. This augurs well for the success of Mr. Bothmer's next Center lecture, which has



been tentatively set for the evening of May 12th at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. His subject is "Tombs and Temples from Assuan to Giza." All members in the New York area will receive formal notice of the lecture at a later date.

Members will recall that in our last newsletter Director Smith told of the photographic expedition of Mr. Ray Garner of the Harmon Foundation. The following account of his work has been sent us by Mr. Garner:

"During the five months, May through September, of last year I had the good fortune to visit, and record on color film, most of the major archaeological sites of Egypt. Approximately thirty thousand feet of 16 mm. Kodachrome was exposed in an attempt to tell the story of the rise of the Pharoanic civilization. An additional five thousand mile journey was made to trace the Nile to the highest point of its watershed at 17,000 feet in the Mountains of the Moon in Uganda.

"For two years prior to my field trip I spent many hours in studying the history of ancient Egypt. This, of course, was only sufficient to convince the student of the hopelessness of tackling the subject singlehanded. The major task - that of editing the film and writing the narration - remains. This is where the film is made, or unmade. Here is where I hope to secure the advice and guidance of those who have given their lives to the subject. Several members of the Research Center have already shown interest in this project. Mrs. Joseph Lindon Smith and Mr. Bernard V. Bothmer were instrumental in paving my way with many helpful suggestions and written introductions before I sailed. I met Dr. William Stevenson Smith and his mother at Mena House. Dr. and Mrs. Smith helped immeasurably with their wide knowledge. He also personally conducted me to many sites at Giza and

Saqqarah. During my first visit to Mena House I was fortunate in also meeting Mr. William K. Simpson of the Metropolitan. Since returning to this country I have had lengthy and helpful conversations with Mr. Bothmer, Mr. Dows Dunham in Boston, and Mr. John Cooney in Brooklyn.

"The Center stands in an interesting position relative to this film; if it turns out to be the type of interpretation pleasing to the Egyptologist, the Center can rightfully claim that it played a part in its production - if not, it then merely withholds its blessing. It is, of course, our aim to produce an authentic documentary study soundly based on scientific fact and accepted theory.

"The aims and ends of such a project can be better understood against the background of our association with the Harmon Foundation of New York City. For the past fifteen years my wife and I have been connected with the Division of Visual Experiment of this philanthropic organization. During this time we have done research work, written scripts, directed, photographed, edited and sounded educational and documentary films covering almost all general phases of human endeavor. Through the years the Foundation has allowed us increasingly greater freedom in selection of subject and locale. The Egyptian project was entirely our own idea. The Foundation agreed to finance the field production with a special grant. My wife, Virginia, who was the still photographer on all of our other ventures, had to remain at home with our new son. Thus, I went to Egypt alone and had to take still pictures as well as produce the movie film.

"The Egyptian Government cooperated to an unprecedented degree. I had told my plans to Ambassador Kamil Abdul Rahim Bey in Washington. He was most enthusiastic and wrote recommendations to several officials in Cairo. This resulted in many friendships in the Ministry of Foreign

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Affairs and the Department of Tourism. In addition to free rail transportation, free accommodations in several rest houses, and a full-time trained assistant, the Government also contributed a substantial cash grant. In the Cairo Museum the glass was removed from several priceless exhibits. Such precious artifacts as the Ahmose golden battle axe were lifted and placed against background sheets so that I could secure natural effects. I was also permitted to go well beyond the usual limits in photographing tombs and temples. For instance, at Abu Simbel I climbed on the lap of the third colossus to get closeups of the gigantic heads. A gasoline generator (on loan from the U.S. Embassy in Cairo) enabled me to light up interiors and so make the first color motion pictures of many tombs.

"This all-out cooperation has resulted in what is probably the most unusual sequences ever photographed in Egypt. With the addition of material I still hope to shoot in museums in this country, I should have a rather complete film coverage. However, this is only the beginning; the writing of the narration, and the music (which I hope to have especially composed and played by a symphonic orchestra) are two tremendous steps yet to be taken. We hope that all three combined will achieve results comparable to Robert Flaherty's classic, "The Titan." In fact, Flaherty himself actually contributed to our field production. He presented an expensive gyroscopic-head tripod specifically designed for the complex type of camera movement necessary to capture the best interpretations of Egyptian art and architecture. Robert Flaherty, had he not died last summer, would have helped push this film into theatrical release. We still propose to do this. As in the case of "The Titan" we will probably release our film first to museums and other educational institutions - and later to the theatres. I will also tour the country

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with an illustrated lecture version. Notwithstanding the probable monetary benefits the venture remains entirely non-commercial. All proceeds will revert to the Harmon Foundation to be used for future documentary productions of a similar nature.

"The present format calls for a feature length (77 minutes, 7 reels) film. Before the main titles a prologue, beginning high in the Mountains of the Moon (showing the birth of the River Nile as single drops of water off the end of the Stanley Glacier) and depicting the growth of the river to its final majestic size as it enters Egypt and sweeps past Abu Simbel, will serve to set the mood in music, narration, and picture. After the main titles symbolic shots will indicate the once lush lands of North Africa gradually drying up and becoming desert, the exodus to the Valley of the Nile, the early struggles and resultant improvement of the first Egyptians by natural selection, the part the harnessing of the Nile itself played in unification, and the formation of the strong centralized government in the Predynastic Period. From this point on we have the wealth of photogenic material of the three great kingdoms and the two intermediate periods. We plan to hold to chronological limits up to Dynasty XIX. At this point we will take a time leap of a thousand years to show some of the architectural triumphs of the Ptolemaic Period. Then we return to the peak of the New Kingdom, ending with the glories of Ramses II. This is merely a rough outline of my thinking at present. It may be much changed before reaching final form. Suggestions, particularly as to material in museums in the United States which should be included, will be most welcome. The lecture version will probably be entitled "Journey into the Past." We are still seeking a suitable title for the theatrical release.

"Two main considerations will govern us throughout; we will maintain scientific accuracy, and we will attempt to achieve an artistic interpretation worthy of the artists of the Old Kingdom."

Mr. Garner is certainly to be commended highly for carrying out his assignment so thoroughly at the hottest and most unpleasant time of the year. His film is magnificently conceived and deserves our warm support and cooperation.

Mrs. Melville Smith, who as Martha Belknap was for many years secretary to Dr. Nelson, first director of Chicago House in Luxor, has been sending on our newsletters to Miss Phoebe G. Byles of Exeter, England. Miss Byles was librarian at Chicago House until 1936 and was moved to reminiscence. She writes:

"The reports bring back old memories. The first library (at Gurnah) was opened on March 11, 1927, and we had a party - all the New York people, two or three Egyptian officials from Luxor, M. Chevrier (I think), and some from Deir el Medineh, the French dig up behind the house, near the Tombs of the Queens. Next morning, soon after I went to work, three young men appeared, in suits, jackets, collars and ties (it was already HOT). They shook hands, clicked heels, and asked if it were true (as they'd heard yesterday) that they might have free admission to the library. I was thrilled! Our (my) first readers! The youngest, in a soft grey-green suit, was Jacques Clère. For many days (2-3 weeks) they came down from Deir el Medineh every morning. The eldest was Jaroslav Cerny, now (I believe) in London. He was then a bank clerk in Prag, with 6 months leave. The third was French - might have been M. Varille, but I can't remember.

"...I hadn't heard of Dr. Steindorff's death. He was a dear! In our second season ('27-'28) he was in the library daily for weeks, revising the Baedeker of Egypt. One day we went up to tea at the German House, and he showed us Karl Baedeker's signature."

On the following pages will be found the minutes of the Annual Meeting, held on November 20, 1951, and the report of the Treasurer. A few memberships have not as yet been renewed. A reminder notice for those who may have overlooked this is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Edward W. Forbes".

Edward W. Forbes
President

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT, INC.

November 20, 1951

L. R. S. G. M.		
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	THORN	

The Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt, Inc., was held this day at four o'clock p.m. in the Trustees Room of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mr. Forbes, President, in the chair and present also twenty-one members.

Total membership being 160, there being present 22 members and represented by proxy 70 members, a majority was present and represented at the meeting.

It was VOTED to dispense with the reading of the Minutes of the last Annual Meeting.

Mr. Keller, Treasurer, reported the cash receipts and disbursements of the Center for the year October 1, 1950 through September 30, 1951, according to the schedule which will be found following the records of this meeting. It was VOTED to accept the Treasurer's Report. It was also VOTED that the Executive Secretary write to Messrs. Goodwin, Procter, and Hoar to thank them for their legal services and for the moderation of their charges.

Mrs. Smith reported a generous gift of funds to the Center, falling outside the Fiscal Year reported, which had been made by Mrs. Godfrey Peckitt of New York in memory of George Andrew Reisner and Joseph Lindon Smith. It was VOTED that the Executive Secretary write to thank Mrs. Peckitt for her goodness.

Professor Parker, Membership Secretary, reported a considerable increase in membership, largely due to the untiring efforts of Mrs. J. L. Smith, of 94 paid-up members and 66 from whom renewals are expected, 107 are Regular Members, 30 Contributing Members, 15 Sustaining Members,

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3 Associates, 3 Fellows, and 2 Life Members. It was VOTED to accept the Membership Secretary's Report.

The President, reviewing the activities of the Center during the past year, noticed the inauguration of activities in Cairo, and the arrival and work of the present director in Egypt, Dr. W. S. Smith. He announced the appointment of Professor Arthur Boak of the University of Michigan as Director to succeed Dr. Smith, and of Mr. John D. Cooney of the Brooklyn Museum as Director to succeed Professor Boak; and mention was made of the Newsletters and re-prints of scholarly publications circulated to members.

The President stated that it was proposed to re-elect for one year the Center's present officers; and on motion duly made and seconded it was VOTED that the Executive Secretary be empowered to cast one ballot on behalf of the meeting for the re-election of the Officers. The ballot having been duly cast, the Officers were declared re-elected.

The Executive Secretary read the names of the following persons proposed by the Executive Committee of the Trustees for election as Trustees to replace the five Trustees whose terms now expired:

Richard Ettinghausen, of the Freer Gallery

Albert Gallatin, Trustee of the Brooklyn Museum

William C. Hayes, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

George R. Hughes, of the Oriental Institute of the
University of Chicago

Miss Amelia Peabody, of Boston

On motion duly made and seconded it was VOTED that the Executive Secretary be empowered to cast one ballot on behalf of the meeting for the election of these persons as Trustees; and the ballot having been duly cast, they were declared elected.

The question of appointing an American resident in Cairo as permanent Director in Egypt, and of altering the present title of Director in Egypt in the case of the officers annually appointed, was discussed at length. Dr. W. S. Smith, it was reported, had written giving his opinion that no such change was desirable; but Professor Parker urged that the Center should as soon as possible become independent of the Fulbright appointments. He stressed the need for continuity, suggested the possibility of closer connection with the Chicago Expedition, and urged that the whole question be taken up in conversations with Dr. Smith upon his return. It was the sense of the meeting that no action be taken at present.

The Chairman spoke of the desirability of holding meetings of the Center in cities other than Boston; and Mr. Bothmer reported a suggestion emanating from New York that a joint meeting with the New York Archaeological Society be held in that city. Lectures in Ann Arbor, Michigan, by himself, and in Chicago by Dr. Smith were in contemplation.

Mr. Dunham proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Keller for his generosity and efficiency in the conduct of his office as Treasurer, which was seconded and carried by acclamation, Mr. Keller dissenting.

Thereupon it was VOTED to adjourn.

(signed) Eric Schroeder

Executive Secretary

SUMMARY OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
October 1, 1950 through September 30, 1951

Balance in Bank, September 30, 1950	\$1,264.38	\$
Received as dues, donations & miscellaneous	<u>2,292.50</u>	3,556.88
Expenditures		
Legal Services & Expenses	468.50	
Stationery, Office Supplies & Expenses	135.56	
Clerical Services	48.60	
Travel	52.28	
Traveling Expenses for Director	657.00	
Miscellaneous	<u>58.09</u>	<u>1,420.03</u>
Balance in Bank, September 30, 1951		<u><u>\$2,136.85</u></u>